

**INFORMATION • INFORMATORISCHE AUFZEICHNUNG • INFORMATION MEMO • NOTE D'INFORMATION
ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΑΚΟ ΣΗΜΕΙΩΜΑ • NOTA D'INFORMAZIONE • TER DOCUMENTATIE**

Brussels, 22 June 1988

THE COMMISSION PROPOSES A RESEARCH PROGRAMME

TO IMPROVE FOOD QUALITY⁽¹⁾

Helping to improve Europe's competitiveness in the food industry, enhance food safety and quality for the benefit of the consumer and strengthen the structures of food science and technology in Europe: those are the broad objectives of the proposal for a Council Decision adopting a multiannual programme of research and development in the field of food science and technology (FLAIR) which has been adopted by the Commission.

Under the proposal the programme would start in January 1989 and run for four-and-a-half years. It would have a budget of 25 million ECU from the amount allocated in the Framework Programme for agro-industrial technologies.

The structure of the Europe's food industry, which accounts for some 10% of Europe's GNP, is particularly complex and fragmented. There are in the Community some 23 750 food processing firms with more than 20 employees, making a total of 2 500 000 people. The bulk of these firms operate on a small scale with small profit margins. This sector is therefore dependent on scientific and technical back-up provided by national authorities and research institutes in order to continue to compete.

Consultations with the various national groups and representatives of the industry have revealed a consensus in favour of a Community initiative to supplement what is being done at national level.

The FLAIR programme is in three parts, each comprising two types of pre-competitive project: concerted-action projects and shared-cost projects. The former can be undertaken within the COST cooperation framework; the latter are open to all universities, research centres and industrial firms in the Member States or in non-member countries who have concluded cooperation agreements with the Community. The programme also makes provision for training and mobility grants.

The programme's three sectors are: evaluation and improvement of food quality; problems of hygiene, safety and toxicity; and nutrition and health questions.

(1) COM(88) 854